Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-25 (canceled).

26 (new). A panel piece mountable on a structure and engageable with a similar panel piece to form a wall panel assembly, said panel piece comprising:

a front side;

a rear side;

a first edge having a tongue extending lengthwise therealong and projecting outwardly therefrom substantially co-planar with said panel piece, a first flange being positioned between said tongue and said rear side, a second flange being positioned between said tongue and said front side; and

a second edge positioned opposite to said first edge and having a groove extending lengthwise therealong, said groove being defined by a rear leg positioned adjacent to said rear side, a front leg positioned in spaced relation to said rear leg and adjacent to said front side, and a base extending between said legs, said rear leg extending further from said base than said front leg such that, upon engagement of said tongue of said panel piece within said groove of said similar panel piece, said first flange engages said rear leg, said tongue being sized so as to remain in spaced apart relation away from said base, and said second flange being sized so as to remain in spaced apart relation away from said front leg, said tongue of said panel piece being captured between said front and rear legs of said similar panel piece.

27 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 26, wherein said tongue extends substantially along the entire length of said first edge.

28 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 26, wherein said groove extends substantially along the entire length of said second edge.

29 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 26, further comprising a plurality of apertures extending through said rear leg, said apertures being positioned in spaced apart relation lengthwise along said rear leg for receiving fasteners therethrough for attachment of said panel piece to said structure.

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30 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 29, wherein said structure comprises an elevator.

31 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 26, wherein said panel piece is formed from a laminate.

32 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 31, wherein said laminate comprises wood and non-wood materials.

33 (new). A wall panel assembly mountable on a structure and comprised of a plurality of interengageable panel pieces, each of said panel pieces comprising:

a front side;

a rear side;

a first edge having a tongue extending lengthwise therealong and projecting outwardly therefrom substantially co-planar with said panel piece, a first flange being positioned between said tongue and said rear side, a second flange being positioned between said tongue and said front side; and

a second edge positioned opposite to said first edge and having a groove extending lengthwise therealong, said groove being defined by a rear leg positioned adjacent to said rear side, a front leg positioned in spaced relation to said rear leg and adjacent to said front side, and a base extending between said legs, said rear leg extending further from said base than said front leg such that, upon engagement of said tongue of one of said panel pieces within said groove of another of said panel pieces, said first flange engages said rear leg, said tongue is sized so as to remain in spaced apart relation away from said base, said second flange is sized so as to remain in spaced apart relation away from said front leg, and said tongue of said one panel piece is captured between said front and rear legs of said other panel piece.

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34 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 33, wherein said tongue on each said panel piece extends substantially along the entire length of said first edge.

35 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 33, wherein said groove on each said panel piece extends substantially along the entire length of said second edge.

36 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 23, further comprising a plurality of apertures extending through said rear leg on each said panel piece, said apertures being positioned in spaced apart relation lengthwise along said rear leg for receiving fasteners therethrough for attachment of said panel pieces to said structure.

37 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 33, wherein said structure comprises an elevator.

38 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 33, wherein each of said panel pieces is formed from a laminate.

39 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 38, wherein said laminate comprises wood and non-wood materials.

40 (new). A panel piece mountable on a structure and engageable with a substantially similar panel piece to form a wall panel assembly, said panel piece comprising:

a front side;

a rear side;

a first edge having a first tongue extending lengthwise therealong and projecting outwardly therefrom in spaced apart relation offset from said front side, said first tongue having a first end surface angularly oriented toward said rear side, a first flange being positioned between said first tongue and said front side; and

a second edge positioned opposite to said first edge and having a second tongue extending lengthwise therealong and projecting outwardly therefrom in spaced apart relation offset from said rear side, said second tongue having a second end surface, a second flange being positioned between said rear side and said second tongue, said second flange being angularly oriented toward said front side such that, upon engagement of said first edge of one of said panel pieces with said second edge of another of said panel pieces, said first tongue is captured in overlying relation with said second tongue upon engagement of said first end surface with said second flange, said second tongue being sized smaller than said first tongue so that said second end surface remains in spaced apart relation away from said first flange thereby defining a gap between said panel pieces in said front side.

41 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 40, wherein said first end surface is oriented at an angle that is complementary to the angular orientation of said second flange.

42 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 40, wherein said first flange is oriented substantially perpendicular to said first tongue.

43 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 40, wherein said second end surface is oriented substantially perpendicular to said second tongue.

44 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 40, wherein said first tongue extends substantially along the entire length of said first edge.

cont. C1

45 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 40, wherein said second tongue extends substantially along the entire length of said second edge.

46 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 40, further comprising a plurality of apertures extending through said first tongue, said apertures being positioned in spaced apart relation lengthwise along said first tongue for receiving fasteners therethrough for attachment of said panel piece to said structure.

47 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 40, wherein said structure comprises an elevator.

48 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 40, wherein said panel piece is formed from a laminate.

49 (new). A panel piece according to Claim 48, wherein said laminate comprises wood and non-wood materials.

50 (new). A wall panel assembly mountable on a structure and comprised of a plurality of interengageable panel pieces, each of said panel pieces comprising:

a front side;

a rear side;

a first edge having a first tongue extending lengthwise therealong and projecting outwardly therefrom in spaced apart relation offset from said front side, said first tongue having a first end surface angularly oriented toward said rear side, a first flange being positioned along said first edge between said first tongue and said front side; and

a second edge positioned opposite to said first edge and having a second tongue extending lengthwise therealong and projecting outwardly therefrom in spaced apart relation offset from said rear side, said second tongue having a second end surface, a second flange being positioned along said second edge between said rear side and said second tongue, said second flange being angularly oriented toward said front side such that, upon engagement of said first edge of one of said panel pieces with said second edge of another of said panel pieces, said first tongue of said one panel piece is captured in overlying relation with said second tongue of said other panel piece, said first end surface of said first tongue engaging said second flange of said other panel piece, said second tongue is sized smaller than said first tongue so that said second end surface of said second tongue remains in spaced apart relation away from said first flange of said first panel piece thereby defining a gap between said panel pieces in said front side.

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51 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 50, wherein said first end surface is oriented at an angle that is complementary to the angular orientation of said second flange.

52 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 50, wherein said first flange is oriented substantially perpendicular to said first tongue.

53 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 50, wherein said second end surface is oriented substantially perpendicular to said second tongue.

54 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 50, wherein said first tongue extends substantially along the entire length of said first edge.

55 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 50, wherein said second tongue extends substantially along the entire length of said second edge.

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56 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 50, further comprising a plurality of apertures extending through said first tongue, said apertures being positioned in spaced apart relation lengthwise along said first tongue for receiving fasteners therethrough for attachment of said panel piece to said structure.

57 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 50, wherein said structure comprises an elevator.

58 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 50, wherein said panel piece is formed from a laminate.

59 (new). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 58, wherein said laminate comprises wood and non-wood materials.

60 (new). A method of installing a wall panel assembly onto a support structure, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of panel pieces, each said panel piece comprising:

a front side;

a rear side;

a first edge having a tongue extending lengthwise therealong and projecting outwardly therefrom substantially co-planar with said panel piece, a first flange being positioned between said tongue and said rear side, a second flange being positioned between said tongue and said front side;

a second edge positioned opposite to said first edge and having a groove extending lengthwise therealong, said groove being defined by a rear leg positioned adjacent to said rear side, a front leg positioned in spaced relation to said rear leg and adjacent to said front side, and a base extending between said legs, said rear leg extending further from said base than said front leg;

attaching at least one of said panel pieces to said support structure; and

engaging said tongue of another of said panel piece within said groove of said one panel piece, said first flange of said other panel piece thereby engaging said rear leg of said one panel piece, said tongue being sized so as to remain in spaced apart relation away from said base on said one panel piece, and said second flange of said other panel piece being sized so as to remain in spaced apart relation away from said front leg on said one panel piece, said tongue of said other panel piece being captured between said front and rear legs of said one panel piece.

61 (new). A method of installing a wall panel assembly onto a support structure, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of panel pieces, each said panel piece comprising:

a front side;

a rear side;

a first edge having a first tongue extending lengthwise therealong and projecting outwardly therefrom in spaced apart relation offset from said front side, said first

tongue having a first end surface angularly oriented toward said rear side, a first flange being positioned along said first edge between said first tongue and said front side;

a second edge positioned opposite to said first edge and having a second tongue extending lengthwise therealong and projecting outwardly therefrom in spaced apart relation offset from said rear side, said second tongue having a second end surface, a second flange being positioned along said second edge between said rear side and said second tongue, said second flange being angularly oriented toward said front side;

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attaching at least one of said panel pieces on said structure; and

engaging said second edge of another of said panel pieces with said first edge of said one panel piece such that said first tongue of said one panel piece is captured in overlying relation with said second tongue of said other panel piece, said first end surface of said first tongue engaging said second flange of said other panel piece, said second tongue being sized smaller than said first tongue so that said second end surface of said second tongue remains in spaced apart relation away from said first flange of said first panel piece thereby defining a gap between said panel pieces in said front side.